



Polo's revival

Lost to China after the Tang Dynasty, Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club is cultivating Chinese polo players from the moneyed class.

Modern masters



Today Art Museum is exhibiting the best works by this year's recipients of the Martell Artists of the Year Award.

The collection, on display through June 30, features pieces by contemporary masters such as Wang Jianwei, Mao Yan, Hong Hao and Patrick Demarchelier.

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Tianjin Polo Club's tourney attracts int'l players

By Annie Wei

Although historical records show polo-like sports being played in China during the Tang Dynasty, the game was forgotten during the last millennium.

But a few businessmen are trying to revive Chinese polo as a luxury sport for the nation's emerging rich.

The Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club has been hosting polo events since 2011.

Last week, its four-day Maserati Metropolitan Polo Classic 2013 ended with Team Maserati prevailing over Team Fortune Heights 8-6.

This year's tournament invited world-class players from Argentina, Chile, England, Italy, New Zealand and Spain.

Each team played with a 24-goal handicap, the highest for an invitational tournament held in China.

On the final day, the first chukka began with a strong start for Team Fortune Heights, which scored two goals in the first minute.

With a rapid and exhausting back and forth, Team Maserati's Gonzalo Azumendi finally scored late in the chukka.

Gonzalo Azumendi, a 6-goal player from Argentina, who went on to score a total of three goals in



Team Maserati beat Team Fortune Heights 8-6 at the Maserati Metropolitan Polo Classic 2013.

Photo provided by Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club

the match, being named the Tournament's Most Valuable Player.

Later on, player Azumendi added another goal for Team Maserati, and Team Fortune Heights' John Fisher managed to take one back with 8 seconds left to play.

At half-time, the score was 4-3 in favour of Team

Maserati.

The sixth chukka opened with Team Maserati still enjoying a 1-goal lead, and then proceeding to add another two goals.

Team Fortune Heights added one goal from Tommy Wilson, and the final score was 8-6 in favour of Team Maserati.

Team Maserati's Matias Zavaleta, a seasoned 7-goal player from Argentina, said he was happy with the outcome of the match, "We have been made so welcome here in Tianjin, rarely have we seen a polo club with facilities like these."

Spectators viewing the match from the marquee

enjoyed free sparkling wine during the game.

Wang Qing, a guest who recently purchased a Maserati Quattroporte and is learning to ride, said it was an enjoyable four days.

"I think polo is a subdued luxury," she said. "One that emphasizes self-restraint over brash action."

Beer Geeks throw festival to show off craft

By Annie Wei

Seven microbreweries and the Beijing Chinese Homebrewers Society teamed up last weekend to organize the Beijing Beer Geeks Festival in Houhai.

Local brands such as Jing A, Slow Boat, Panda Brewpub and Topsy Face Microbrewery headlined the festival, and were accompanied by Master Gao's from Nanjing and Chengdu's Harvest Beer and Belgium Beer.

The breweries showed off more than 20 craft brews including Pilsners, double IPAs and imperial stout.

Four of the breweries are owned and operated by Chinese, making this event the first craft festival with a majority of Chinese breweries.

At the event, Beijing came out ahead as the nation's leader in craft brews.

Gao Yan, owner of Master Gao's brewery in Nanjing,



Yin Hai, founder of Topsy Face
Photos provided by imbeer.com



Beer Geeks Festival draws hundreds of visitors.

brought 20 cases of Baby IPA to the event. As the first craft beer bottled in China, it was the most popular.

"This is quite exciting, it's such a big breakthrough and means a lot to all the craft breweries in China," Gao said. "I'm sure we'll see more bottled craft beers distributed nationally in the near future."

Topsy Face Microbrewery, founded in late 2012, had four

of its flagship beers on tap at the event, including a double IPA.

"Things happened so fast. Just yesterday, most people believed IPAs were too bitter for Chinese drinkers. Now they are our best sellers!" said Yin Hai, founder of Topsy Face.

Several hundred beer lovers turned up to support the local craft beer movement, including ones from Qingdao and Wuhan, and a few from

as far as Guangdong Province and Xinjiang.

"We're so excited to see so much craft beer being made in China," said Xiaobia'r, owner of Pass-by Bar at Nanluogu Xiang and one of the organizers.

Xiaobia'r has been collecting craft beer bottles since he started travelling abroad in the mid-2000s.

"When I was travelling in the US, I was amazed by all the fantastic craft beer choices," he said. "We never imagined it could take off this quickly in China."

"I have been to all the emerging craft beer houses and sampled most of them. Most are beginners, so the quality is inconsistent, but everything here tasted great," said Qi Xuan, a local woman and beer fan.

"Today's event was simply amazing," she said.

'90s migrants take the lead in public service

By Bao Chengrong

Most of the public views the children of migrant workers as charity cases.

But a new generation is shaking stereotypes and leading efforts to teach their younger peers and serve the community.

Among them is Zhang Bingxin, an 18-year-old with a passion for public service. Two years ago she tried teaching and found the classroom environment just clicked.

"I received a lot of help from volunteers when I was in middle school. That experience moved me to think about who I could help," Zhang said.

She reasoned that her own experiences would help her to understand and be a good teacher for migrant children.

Zhang soon won the hearts of her students, who saw her as an inspiration and someone they could turn to for advice.

But Zhang found it hard to answer questions relevant to the future because she still has no clear plans of her own.



Luo Jinqiang

As one of the few high school students among her peers, she may soon find herself unable to continue her own studies. Zhang has encouraged those who are talented and hardworking to return to their hometowns for middle school: the first step in getting on



Luo Jinqiang and Zhang Bingxin share their experiences.

Photo provided by 706 Youth Space

track for a chance to take National College Entrance Examination.

Zhang has also volunteered to teach children in her hometown and donate books. She collects used books from Beijing's high schools and takes them to children who have been left behind in rural Henan Province.

"I strongly encourage the new generation of migrants to go back and teach the children in their hometowns. Our similar experiences make us better communicators," Zhang said.

"Most of the educators being hired to teach migrants don't understand what the children really need."

Luo Jinqiang is another young adult who is eager to help. Unlike their parents, the new generation of migrants is likely to feel they have no place in the world even as their material conditions improve.

Volunteering for NGOs allowed Luo to see that most organizations fail to provide migrant children what they really need.

"We were told to line up and applaud for representatives of NGOs and enterprises who donate money or materials to the schools. But I don't understand why should we be defined as a vulnerable group and forced to become passive recipi-

ents," Luo said.

Another problem he found is that while many NGOs can create well-designed courses, few can run them for very long.

He hopes to fill the gap.

After years of preparation, Luo opened up a community center for migrant children. The center aims to gather young migrants to communicate with each other through music, painting and documentary.

"We plan to shoot documentaries for our community. It will allow the public to see the real lives of young migrants," Luo said.

"But more importantly, it will encourage more migrants to work together and develop a community identity."

He encouraged young migrants to work for mature NGOs or find chances to travel.

"If they return to serve the community, it's great. If they find other jobs they want to do, it's also great," Luo said.

"I believe we are moving forward so long as they grow in their endeavors."

Maitian brings art to struggling children

By Bao Chengrong

Access to artistic education has long been considered a luxury for rural children, but some local NGOs are working to change that.

Maitian Education Foundation, in cooperation with Ballet Magazine, launched a dance project for the children of the capital's migrant workers last June.

The 40 children participating in the pilot performed their first recital at the Water Cube on June 10.

Wang Jingbing, manager of the project, made an unusual choice in casting a heavy girl in the children's "Dance of the Four Swans."

"She is fascinated by dance and has a good sense of rhythm, but embarrassment about her weight made her reluctant to participate," Wang said.

It is not the first time Maitian has educated the capital's disadvantaged children. Since its establishment, Maitian's projects have brought art to 602 children in the districts



Migrant children learning dance

Photo provided by Maitian Education Foundation

of Chaoyang and Changping.

Early in 2005, its founder Mo Fan planned to collect drawings by rural children as he found they were capable of some amazing work. He selected 40 of their best for exhibition alongside those of

urban children in Shanghai in 2011.

"Mo wanted rural children to draw their hometowns the way they see them. His idea was to use the proceeds of the exhibition to help more rural children

gain access to art education," Wang said.

The drawing project also benefited the children of ethnic minorities in Sichuan Province. The children, most of whom cannot speak standard Chinese or a similar dia-

lect, expressed their feelings about nature and their culture through art.

"We don't expect to train the children to be professional painters or dancers. We just hope they can learn to appreciate beauty and use art to express their opinions, particularly those who are not good at expressing their thoughts in words," Wang said.

"They are more likely to feel happy, improve their observation abilities and learn to cooperate in the process."

"When they complete their studies and go to look for work in the big city, their personal qualities and level of engagement will be very different from their parents' generation," Wang said.

Wang and her colleagues are planning to bring the two art projects to Ya'an in August.

Volunteers will spend a week training to learn rhythm and the NGO's course materials. They will then spend a month teaching dance, drama and drawing to the children.

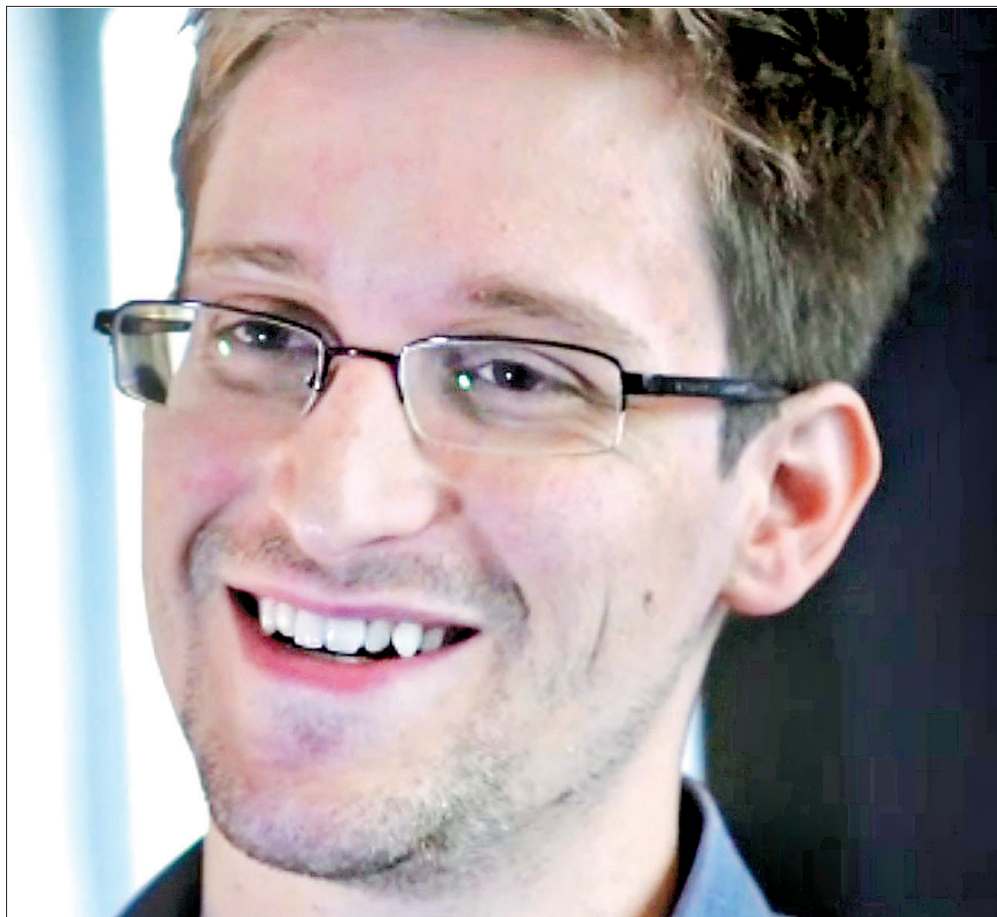
Whistleblower's revelations open privacy debate

By Zhao Hongyi

A world more than happy to share its most intimate details on social networking sites has developed a new fascination with privacy thanks to Edward Snowden.

Last month, the 29-year-old computer specialist and former government contractor blew the whistle on the US government's widespread Internet surveillance and espionage hacking.

The series of investigative reports that have come out of his leaks have spawned new debate over the delicate balance between privacy and national security in the digital age.



Edward Snowden is assumed to be hiding in Hong Kong.

IC Photos

The people's hero

On June 5, the *Guardian* released a report that the US Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court had ordered US telecom giant Verizon to cough up the metadata of all calls to and within the US.

It was the first of many shocking revelations that would come from Snowden's leaks.

Within a week, the world had learned about the clandestine PRISM project that grants US spies access to most of the world's email, web searches and Internet traffic, as well as a second system that maps this data to real locations.

But most damning was evidence of the National Security Agency's (NSA) hacking of not only Chinese and Hong Kong computer systems, but those of traditional US allies.

It was embarrassing for US President Obama, who lashed out at President Xi Jinping for Chinese hacking of US databases at a security summit held June 6 to 8 in California.

Snowden told the *Guardian* that the US government's incredible worldwide surveillance is trampling many of the most sacred human rights.

As a former employee of Booz Allen Hamilton, a private NSA contractor, Snowden had inside access to many of the world's most sophisticated electronic surveillance systems.

Since his whistleblowing, Snowden has been hiding out in Hong Kong, where he arrived on May 20.

Most US officials have rushed to condemn his behavior and label him a traitor, with former Vice President Dick Cheney accusing Snowden of being a Chinese mole.

While the UK rushed to ban him from passing through its country, Russia said it would accept Snowden as a refugee if he chooses to seek asylum.

Snowden's leaks have continued, with new evidence of spying on the delegates of G20 in 2009 as more evidence that the NSA's intrusion goes far

beyond the boundaries of national security.

'Free' no more

In China, the young whistleblower has started a new debate about national defense and privacy among younger netizens. While many youths have been quick to support the idea of privacy as a sacred right, others say national defense comes first.

But for both sides, the revelations have utterly crushed their image of the US and UK as "free" countries. The scandal has been a somber reminder that all governments abuse the rights of their citizens.

The latest poll by the *South China Morning Post* showed more than half of Hong Kong's residents opposed handing Snowden over to the US government. Demonstrators took to the streets on Monday to condemn the US government's actions while chanting "We are all whistleblowers!" in a show of solidarity.

Snowden's ultimate fate may lie in the hands of the



Cisco and many other digital companies may have handed over their clients' private information to the government.



John Snowden asks for his son to be allowed to return home.

Hong Kong people.

Snowden currently resides at an undisclosed location on the island. He is expected to live the rest of his life in danger and hopes to find political asylum in Iceland.

"I would risk everything to tell the public the truth about people's privacy and human rights," Snowden said. "The point is the US government has opened surveillance to too many people. Anyone connected to national security has access to private information."

The Chinese government denied any connection with Snowden on Monday, following a week of blustering accusations by top US officials that Snowden was selling secrets to China.

Privacy and national security

"The question of privacy depends on who is invading that privacy," said Li Man-lin, a professor of social science at Peking University.

"While we as people should respect the privacy of individuals in daily life, the government need not adhere to that same standard," he said. "The government can reasonably monitor the digital footprints of an entire nation to follow one suspect."

Individuals who communicate with each other are no

longer isolated and private, he said. There will always be a trail for the government to follow, he said.

"We make too much of our privacy," said Hainin Sundstrom, a New Yorker. "It's all a matter of balance."

On June 17, Denis McDonough, chief of staff at the White House, said Obama will discuss the need to "find the right balance, especially in this new situation where we find ourselves reliant on the Internet, e-mail, texting" in a CNN interview.

But he was quick to deny any wrongdoing by the government.

"It's fine to monitor suspected terrorists for national security, but monitoring foreign nationals and high-ranking government officials is another matter," said Teng Jianxin, a professor at Tsinghua University.

"This case will hinge on how deeply the US government has invaded the privacy of private citizens, what impact it has had on their lives and how easily it allows its employees to access this data," Li said.

As of Wednesday, the *People's Daily* said China has no interest in the NSA scandal or Snowden's troubles.

"We'll continue to put domestic problems first," it said in an editorial.

Chinese artists shine at awards

By Liu Xiaochen

Four artists from China and France were presented with the Martell Artists of the Year Award at Today Art Museum in Chaoyang District on June 15.

The annual award recognizes artists who are devoted to innovation and who make outstanding achievements in the field of contemporary art.

Conceptual artist Wang Jianwei, oil painter Mao Yan, photographer Hong Hao and Patrick Demarchelier, this year's recipients, will have their works exhibited at Today Art Museum through June 30.

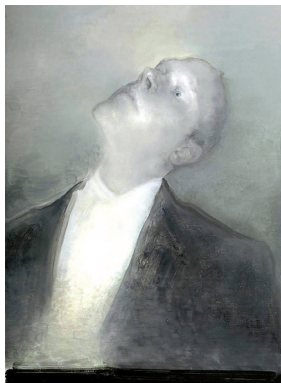
Demarchelier is best known as the late Princess Diana's favorite photographer and the first non-British photographer of the UK's royal family. He has shot for fashion magazines, brands, A-list stars, supermodels and celebrities.

He often captures the dynamic beauty of the female form and makes good use of natural light to express elegance and beauty.

"I like women and think every woman is beautiful," he said. "A woman's beauty comes from her physical appearance and other less tangible traits. Even a woman who is not objectively pretty can have adorable expressions, and this is something I try to capture."



Mao Yan



Thomas



Posie Musgrau NO.2

China's leading artists

As a prominent Chinese contemporary artist working in new media and conceptual art, Wang provides a common sense foundation for the abstract social order of contemporary life.

Owing to his non-conformist nature, Wang chooses a life of solitude, refusing neither to seek nor to offer advice. His works avoid social topics, standing alone as rational creations.

Wang never repeats a topic to build a pattern for his style. He is obsessed with random detail and finding inspiration in life. He does not embellish or vilify human society, focusing instead on direct empathy and profound simplicity.

"I've always wanted to explain my work through scientific and philosophic unknowns rather than in the context of art or art history," Wang said. "Learning what I don't yet know and where to learn it is important to me. As an artist, finding ways to create works in the context of things I don't yet know is the ultimate challenge."

Oil painter Mao endows his oil paintings with aesthetic quality. Each blends the sublime and avant-garde with his uncanny ability to capture the nature of ordinary people. Each portraits plumbs the depths of the soul and seems to trace its contours.

His extraordinary artistic vision is as smooth as it is meticulous, and its aesthetic quality has taken Chinese realist painting to unprecedented heights.

The richness of Zen thought lies at the heart of Mao's thinking. He fuses contradictory modes of existence into a unified language of painting – a feat exemplified in his 12-year-series of gray portraits of a subject named "Thomas."

"If you want to paint well, all the elements are indispensable. You cannot paint with a clever idea or impulse," Mao said.

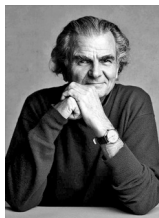
"If an artist is very lucky, he can create another self that is distinct from his real life – an idealized person in his mind," he said. "I think I have achieved that."

Photographer Hong combines mass media symbols to bring coherence to a clash of civilizations. Through relentless and witty reflections on society, history and art, he offers penetrating insight into consumer impulses and modern Chinese society.

Hong is the silent observer, intuitively superimposing, transforming and arranging historical and cultural symbols to stimulate cautionary reflection.

His meticulous day-to-day observations ensure that each of the individual objects that appear in his work has a concrete connection to life. His intense aesthetic sensibility, meanwhile, provides a portrait of contemporary society's consumer landscape.

"By working in this way, I can observe what enables us to survive," Hong said.



Patrick Demarchelier (left) and his works

Trends in art

Although he began as a student of painting, Wang soon rejected the brush to pursue multimedia art.

"In 1983, when my teacher brought slides from abroad to show us a kind of art called installation, my entire concept of art was uprooted," Wang said. "I spent the next two years painting nothing and always reading."

"The foreign works showed me the most important thing for contemporary art is the creation of an identity," he said.

Mao said modern artists are so successful because they never stop creating.

"If most environments, it is acceptable if you are not the best. As long as you continue on your path without interruption, there is no reason you cannot get by," he said.

"That's not the case in China. After many years, people have returned to art to find that everything is uncertain. You care less about what may happen than sustaining what is happening," he said.

Hong spoke briefly about pop art when receiving his award.

"Pop art's development ended 50 years ago. It has become a classic, because its value remains tied to that time," he said.

"Although it played a role in the development of art, everyone has come to accept it and take it as a kind of style or symbol. They lack the experience that made it significant."



Hong Hao



Visitors discuss Hong Hao's works.



Wang Jianwei



Welcome to the Real Desert

Photos provided by Hill + Knowlton Strategies

A better world for women

By Liu Xiaochen

After being published in 12 countries, author Muriel de Saint Sauveur has brought *A Woman's World, a Better World* to China.

The book is based on Sauveur's interviews with more than 100 women from 33 countries that explore how women would change the world if they were so empowered.



Muriel de Saint Sauveur

Photos provided by Muriel de Saint Sauveur

A feminist

As a feminist, Sauveur, 59, decided early on that motherhood was not for her. Even marriage was out of the picture.

While she still has no desire for family life, she did marry three years ago.

"The feminist movement of 30 years ago gave women the idea that freedom was possible. There was no reason to chase after a fairytale ending," she said.

"I think feminism is about thinking of possibilities. It pushes you to look at the world, at men and women and at how men and women are living. We are fighting to give women possibilities," she said.

As the leader of her company's work on gender equality and diversity, Sauveur has seen many recruitment figures firsthand. Even when organizations recruit 50 percent men and 50 percent, only 9 percent of the women ever reach the upper levels of management.

To find what leads so many women off course, she began to travel.

She said women in many countries are discriminated against on the basis of their gender, and that the best way to address their struggles is to survey the world's women about where their power and dreams end.

The resulting book's Chinese title means "If Women Ruled the World." But Sauveur says that is not her goal.

"The title was chosen to open discussion. But I want the world to be shared between men and women, and I want women to be able to choose their life as men do today."

Tough situation in China

Sauveur was not sure how women would respond to the idea. But the candid interviews of several women in Shanghai showed her that life as a woman in China is not easy.

"Many women are not willing to take charge of their lives or don't know how. They need help to change – especially in China," she said.

Sauveur met many women who had clear goals, such as an artist in her 30s who flies between Europe and Asia and a 50-year-old businesswoman.

She can also meet many young women who were still in school. While most of the dreamed of career life, they all said they felt pressure to go home and raise a family.

"One young girl asked whether desiring family life was something to be ashamed about. I said of course not: feminism is about choice," she said.

"In China, being married is considered more important than having a job or being happy. But many women are realizing that this isn't fair. In big cities, we are seeing many women who fight against their families for the freedom to choose both family life and career," she said.

"Young women were very happy to talk with me because they did not have anywhere else to discuss this. I hope Chinese people can learn about and be inspired by how women live in other countries," she said.

Global environment

During Sauveur's interview, she found women in the world have something in

common even their lives are quite different. All are concerned about the education of their children.

"When I say education, I am talking about concepts of male and female roles, how their children see the world, how they learn about religion and how they learn about other peoples," Sauveur said.

Sauveur said the interviews made her reconsider how difficult it is to be a woman in today's world.

"But I feel that this world is about to change because women are gaining more and more power in many countries," she said.

There's some evidence that companies are learning to appreciate women's contributions in business.

According to "Women Matter 2010", a McKinsey report, male leaders tend to focus on short-term issues and bias whereas female executives are better at long-term planning and image building.

"Women do not want power for the sake of having power, but for changing the world and improving it," she said.

"One African proverb says that when you educate a woman, you educate a family; when you educate a man, you educate one person."

Women around the world reported very different challenges in their lives.

In Pakistan, women said even going to school is a battle. Most struggle to avoid being married off at the age of 12 or 13.

In Russia, she also met young girls at a university who wanted to work and have only one or two children. But Russian women face religious pressure, as many families ask them to leave the workplace and fulfill their traditional roles in the domestic sphere.

Latin American women are

similarly bound by tradition.

"In Mexico, India, Pakistan, China, Russia and Malaysia ... women faced pressure of society, their families and their husbands. The traditional role of a women is the mother, and family life is still considered very important in some countries."

"I think US and France are very free by comparison. In France, most women work and have a family at the same time, and are happy to have both," Sauveur said. "One thing that was common around the world was the desire to change and choose freedom. For me, that represents the dawn of a revolution."

At the same time, she found women lack the confidence to take charge of their lives.

"In some countries, I met successful women who received great support from their fathers or husbands. They assured them they could achieve anything," she said.

"Around the world, many of the most important women are supported by their husbands and fathers. These men raise daughters who believe they are smart enough and excellent enough to achieve anything. That's something I saw in many of my interviews," she said.

Sauveur's first book took her half a year to finish. She plans to write another one about men in September.



A Woman's World, a Better World, Chinese edition

Summer essentials

By Annie Wei

This week, *Beijing Today* rounds up some simple yet practical items sure to make your summer even better.



Photos provided by Yoshiiya

Handkerchiefs

Remember the old days of handkerchiefs? Long ago, the now denigrated "snot rag" was an essential item for every gentleman.

A clean, quality handkerchief comes in handy when you need to dab your forehead or sneeze. Even today they remain a staple of romance movies.

Most modern city dwellers prefer packs of paper tissue, but dead trees are hardly as eco-friendly as washable, reusable cotton. They also tend to disintegrate and leave bits of paper on your face if you try to wipe away sweat.

There are a few Taobao stores selling fine handkerchiefs from top manufacturers such as Emanuel Ungaro, Gay Laroche and Pierre Balmain. Each costs 29 yuan.

One of the more interesting customer reviews reads, "Can you please stop making these handkerchiefs so nice? My wife has switched from buying clothes every day to buying handkerchiefs."

Website: yoshiiya.taobao.com



Fishing is fun sport, but requires patience, skill and good equipment.
CFP Photos

Fishing gear

Many people prefer the Liangma River for their leisure walks – especially seniors, who meet every day to swim and fish.

Local authorities have improved the riverside landscape with wood decks and benches to support the booming fishing scene.

Anyone interested can bring their own tackle box for a fun and relaxing day.

Start with a beginner fishing kit from Decathlon, priced 149 yuan. Taobao has plenty of vendors selling bait and lures, or you can visit the indoor Tianyu market by Tuanjiehu to find similar goods at a low price.

Decathlon

Where: Dajiaoting Nan Jie, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am – 9 pm

Tel: 8777 8788

Tianyu Pifa Shichang

Where: 10 Tuanjiehu Dong Li, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am – 6 pm

Tel: 8598 9422

Chic loafers

This summer's most fashionable footwear is without a doubt Toms, a line of rubber-sole loafers available with canvas or cotton uppers.

The brand has been around since 2006 and found fame when it started offering a free pair of shoes to a child in a developing country for each pair of Toms sold.

Although the company offers many shoe styles, it's the classic lineup that's in. Pair your Toms with shorts, a long skirt or capris for a look that's casual and comfortable!

Lane Crawford

Where: 2 Jinchengfang Jie, Xicheng District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6622 0808



Many brands are pushing their loafers this summer, including Adidas.

CFP Photo

Restaurants that put quality first

By Annie Wei

More and more customers are becoming choosy about the safety and quality of their cooking ingredients.

Some of the city's restaurants have taken notice.

This week, *Beijing Today* scouts two restaurants that serve safe and delicious food.



Litou makes its ice cream fresh.

Arty spot on the west end

Residents of the city's far west side need no longer despair over the selection of dining options.

Litou, a newly opened restaurant by the Military Museum and China Millennium Monument, offers an arty gallery ambience and nice food.

Its dishes are based around the 24 solar divisions in the Chinese agricultural calendar. Litou's chef said it is the best way to ensure diners' food is flavorful, seasonal and healthy.

Its kitchen serves up Chinese cuisine made with modern cooking techniques and Western garnishing. All herbs are grown organically and in-house.

Its seasonal fruits and mango ice cream are prepared with liquid nitrogen to ensure they stay cool and frozen longer at the table.

Litou's seasonal vegetable starter is mix of a dozen greens, beans, sprouts, flowers, mushrooms, dates, gourds and radishes in a beautiful arrangement.

Our favorite was the espresso soy milk, made with five kinds of soy beans. The silky and rich flavor gives an immediate boost of energy.

All dishes are delicately prepared so you can taste the different layers of fresh and tasty ingredients.

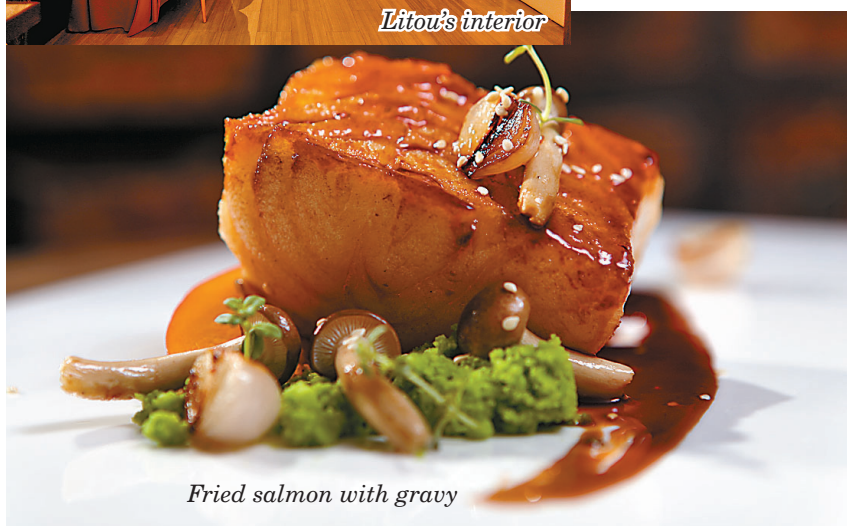
Litou

Where: B1, China Millennium Monument, Jia 9, Fuxing Lu, Haidian District

Open: RSVP / Tel: 5980 2362



Litou's interior



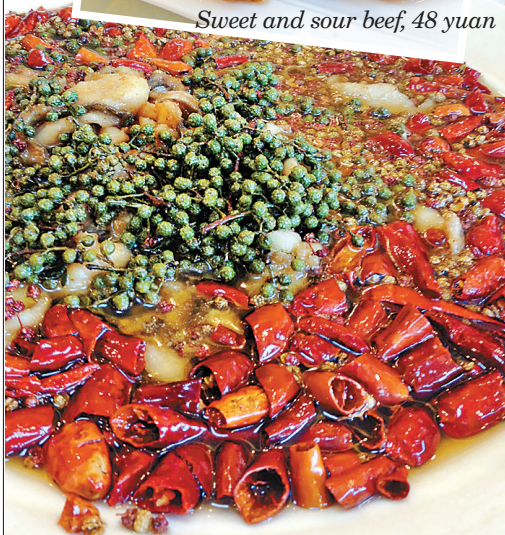
Fried salmon with gravy

Stewed beef and mushroom

Photos provided by Litou



Sweet and sour beef, 48 yuan



Spicy oil-boiled fish starting at 98 yuan

Photos by An Jianda

Yummy Sichuan

Jiaoxiang Chuancai Gongfang was intended to become a cafeteria and wine house.

However, the tough market led owner Nancy Chang to reshape it into a top-level Sichuan restaurant – a cuisine famous for its spicy flavor, fragrant herbs and oils.

Chang's restaurant purchases its ingredients from Metro, a members-only supermarket: its oils are guaranteed to be clean and are never reused.

Her head chef helps select herbs and ingredients, as it takes a trained eye to avoid such bogus spices as artificially reddened chili peppers.

Shuizhuyu, fish boiled in spicy oil, is a must for every Sichuan restaurant. Diners love the fresh, tender, spicy and numbing flavor of the fish, as well as the bean sprouts and lettuce that help soak up the flavor.

But many restaurants sell their Shuizhuyu with fat and watery sprouts tainted with numerous chemicals. Chang's bean sprouts appear thin and tiny by contrast.

"These are like the sprouts I grow at home. Natural bean sprouts are

slender," a customer said.

The Shuizhuyu is served in a generous portion, with 1 kilogram tails starting at 98 yuan. The most popular fish for shuizhuyu is Chinese longsnout catfish (168 yuan per tail), with tender meat and easily avoidable bones.

For ginger frog (98 yuan), the chef uses crispy, purple-tipped ginger that gives the dish a greater aroma.

Huajiangji, ash pepper chicken (68 yuan), was tasty. The chef uses a pile of fresh prickly ash on each plate. Many customers ask to carry out the leftover ingredients to reuse when cooking vegetables at home.

Sichuan dingdingxiangboji with tomato (98 yuan), a classic Sichuan dish of dry wokked chicken, is the most popular dish with local diners.

The head chef says this dish has to make use of artificial additives to have the right flavor. Chang, to her credit, is completely forthcoming

about this information. Concerned diners may want to pass it up.

Other dishes we liked included tangchu niuliu, sweet and sour beef (48 yuan), and the house deep-fried meat balls (48 yuan).

Chang offers a few Australian wines to pair Sichuan food. Although the wines were not special, they did help to cleanse the palate and lips of any spicy and numbing flavors.

The restaurant is located in an office compound at Sanyuanqiao and Fenghuanghui, and it's packed with

diners during lunch hour.

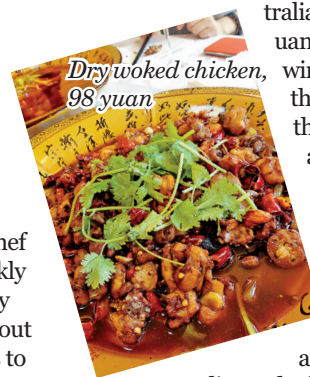
If you want to savor your meal, it's best to come for dinner or on the weekend.

Jiaoxiang Chuancai Gongfang

Where: 102, office building 1, Time Fortune, Jia 6, Shuguang Xi Li, Sanyuanqiao, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm

Tel: 5715 0219



Dry wokked chicken, 98 yuan